

The Academy and Literature.

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The Literary Week.

THE strike in the bookbinding trade, and the consequent delay in the binding of new books, may result in the introduction into this country of the system of paper-covered books. A leading firm of publishers is seriously considering a departure of this nature. In our present issue we publish an article on the fiction of the past twelve months, and attempt to grapple with the enormous number of new novels that have been issued this season. Mr. Barrie's "The Little White Bird" will be published next Monday. As it is well understood that no review of a new book must be printed before the day of publication, we were a little surprised to notice last Thursday, in a contemporary, a long review of this novel by Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch. In the course of this previous and prettily-written review of "The White Bird," Mr. Couch remarks: "You may say, and plausibly, that it was written by a fairy for fairies; or, still better, that it was written by a contrite fairy for fairy changelings; but I should prefer to call it a book written by the child inside Mr Barrie for the children we used to be." Since our last issue we have received 100 new volumes. We may mention the following as worthy of particular consideration:—

THE CAMBRIDGE MODERN HISTORY. VOL. I. THE RENAISSANCE.

This monumental work in twelve volumes was planned, as we have already stated, by the late Lord Acton. It has three editors—Dr. A. W. Ward, Dr. C. W. Prothero, and Mr. Stanley Leathes. This first volume contains over 800 pages divided into 19 chapters, the work of 17 pens. The "Times," on the day of publication, printed a three-column review of this book.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM. By F. Podmore. 2 vols.

To write a history of modern spiritualism was a delicate task. But Mr. Podmore is a patient and kindly investigator: he has had experience of strange phenomena as an active member of the Society for Psychical Research, and his conclusions are free from partizanship. We review Mr. Podmore's volumes this week.

THE MEANING OF GOOD. By G. Lowes Dickinson.

It is a good sign when a modest, truth-seeking little book like this goes into a second edition. The author

has cast his contribution to the reading of the Riddle into dialogue form. "My own attitude," he says, "in approaching the issues with which I have dealt was, I found, so little dogmatic, so sincerely speculative, that I should have felt myself hampered by the form of a treatise."

SHAKESPEARE: THE EDINBURGH FOLIO. Parts 18, 19, 20.

Edited by W. E. Henley.

We have selected the three latest parts of this issue of Shakespeare's plays on account of the printing and format. This publication touches the high-water mark in modern book-production. Type, paging, paper are rest and refreshment to the eye. Another example of good printing and decorative design is the re-issue of "Aucassin and Nicolette." "This Is of Aucassin and Nicolette" are the only words on the title-page, in a large space of white.

MR. ANDREW LANG has devoted an article in the "Morning Post" to the discussion of a paper which appeared in the ACADEMY. Mr. Lang is quite welcome, as he appears to know, to find what inspiration he can in our columns. He is a busy man, and the use of our article must have saved him the trouble of looking through a box of books from the London Library. But Mr. Lang should know better (he is not a beginner) than to be so youthfully gleeful over the discovery of two trifling and accidental printers' errors in our issue. One of them was an *a* for an *e*. We believe that Mr. Lang is a splendid cricketer from the grand-stand, and we ask him: Is this playing the game? We do not wish to retaliate, but we foresee a time when we shall have to read Mr. Lang's many contributions to the press for the purpose of discovering printers' errors in them. But we shall not publish them ourselves, we shall offer them to the editor of "The Protest." We imagine that Edenbridge would smile.

THE apparently unjust exclusion of certain authors from the supplement to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," of which many critics complained, has been satisfactorily explained. An arbitrary age limit was fixed: no writer under sixty was to have a place. We can understand that some such limit was necessary, but an explanatory note to the volume would have saved a good deal of trouble and bewilderment.

THE memoir of Edward Bowen, by his nephew the Rev. the Hon. W. E. Bowen, takes rather an unusual form. It is a memoir and a literary memorial combined. The first two-hundred-and-sixty pages are devoted to the biography, and the remainder of the volume to essays and verses by the late distinguished Harrow Master. Edward Bowen's influence was always strong at Harrow, "but," says his biographer, "it has yet to be fully felt through all the length and breadth of the scholastic world." The words set at the beginning of the volume, words which strike the note of a just sympathy, are these: "Kindliness and neighbourhood, and child-life, and the fresh wind of heaven . . . and the sun-break upon the stainless peaks, and contempt of wrong, and pain, and death." The sum of such a personal influence as Bowen's can never accurately be gauged; it spreads through the life of a generation and affects the actions of men who could, perhaps, hardly trace the inspiration of those actions. "He was," writes his nephew, "a man of deep loveliness, capable of giving to others, and of drawing to himself from others, intense affection." There was the secret of his power. Of Bowen's songs, of which he over-modestly said "for whatever interest they may have awakened, they are chiefly indebted to the genius and skill of Mr. John Farmer," the best known is of course "Forty Years On." This note upon a book to which we shall return later may fitly close with the first verse of that song:—

Forty years on, when afar and asunder
Parted are those who are singing to-day,
When you look back, and forgetfully wonder
What you were like in your work and your play.
Then, it may be, there will often come o'er you
Glimpses of notes like the catch of a song—
Visions of boyhood shall float them before you,
Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.
Follow up! Follow up! Follow up! Follow up!
Till the field ring again and again,
With the tramp of the twenty-two men,
Follow up! Follow up!

APPROPOS of our note concerning the bunyip Mr. Elliot Stock sends us an interesting story. In the fifties, when the gold fever was still high, a walrus came ashore near an Australian town; the creature was captured and sold to an enterprising digger, who constructed a booth, put the walrus in it, and wrote over the concern in flaring letters, "The Bunyip has arrived." The show was a great financial success, but the change of environment did not suit the spurious bunyip. In two or three days, in spite of a compulsory diet of fresh fish, he died, and the body was sold to the curator of the local museum. Mr. Stock suggests that this unfortunate walrus may have been stuffed and labelled "The Bunyip." Certainly the popular idea of the bunyip has much in common with the walrus, and many legends have grown up from less likely beginnings.

THE Royal Society has been engaged continuously during the past forty years in cataloguing the various scientific papers which have been issued in all parts of the world since the beginning of the last century. The expense of this work has been very large. At first the printing and publication were undertaken by H.M. Stationery Office, the Treasury having determined that the catalogue should be printed at the public expense. But that support was withdrawn in 1889, since which time the expense has devolved upon the Royal Society. The Royal Society now feels that its increasing activities hardly warrant this expenditure, and they appeal for outside support to complete their work. Dr. Ludwig Mond has promised £1,500 a year for four years, and Mr. Andrew Carnegie has contributed £1,000. The cost of completing the catalogue is estimated at £12,000.

IN the current "Lippincott's Magazine" there appears an interesting article entitled "A Slender Sheaf of Memories." The writer, who disguises his personality under the pseudonym of "Senex," devotes most of his article to James Hannay, a journalist and man of letters whom this generation has practically forgotten. Hannay, indeed, did not make the reputation which his early promise seemed to have marked out for him; he did some sound critical work, edited the Edinburgh "Evening Courant," and died at forty-six. The writer of the article quotes two characteristic letters now in his possession addressed to Hannay, one from Carlyle, the other from Thackeray. Carlyle wrote apropos of a laudatory article on him by Hannay:—

If you are decided to follow literature as a practical employment,—which I should by no manner of means advise if you were *not* decided,—you will either give up such notions as these that dictated the paper on me, or else prepare yourself for one of the fiercest struggles, successful or not! I wish you the best "success," that of growing, in this pursuit or in other fruitfuller ones, to your full spiritual stature under God's sky.

From Thackeray's letter we cut the following:—

I'm very glad you are in the country and like it. . . . And I envy a man who has freshness enough in him left to be meditating heroic satires and reading Catullus in green lanes. I fancy sometimes I could do these things, but I'm afraid it's too late now. The London literary street-walkers must come back to the flags. They are taken home and lead virtuous lives for a little—but they come back to the lamps and the gin-palace again. If you have a fair opening in a profession for God's sake take it and don't depend on our's. I expect myself to be done in three or four years, and then what is to happen?

This was written in 1850, before much of Thackeray's finest work was written. In three or four years he had by no means "done."

WHAT Carlyle and Thackeray advised the literary aspirant to do a couple of generations ago the "Saturday Review" advises him to do to-day. He must give up his aspirations; if he declines to do that he must be suppressed. "The truth is," says the "Saturday," "that literary aspirations should mercilessly be crushed: the only rational advice to give to any one, especially a young man, who talks of giving up work of any kind for literature, is 'don't.' But the "Saturday" makes the inevitable reservation, "he who has it in him to accomplish real literature will accomplish it." And that reservation, after all, begs the whole question. The aspirant does think that he can accomplish real literature, and he continues to think it when his friends have given him up. There is something in the printed word which fosters illusions; it suggests unrealisable possibilities to the people who are never more than aspirants to the end.

MR. EDWARD HUTTON writes in the "Monthly Review" of the "Novels and Plays of D'Annunzio." On the whole it is the most discriminative piece of writing on D'Annunzio which we have read in English. Mr. Hutton's sympathies are wide, with unexpected reservations. Himself something of the poet, a good deal of the mystic, he sees in D'Annunzio, and very rightly, much of both. He also sees very clearly the extraordinary brutality of his author's realism, his lack of true characterisation, his passion for the unessential. "He describes the plucking of a living dove," says Mr. Hutton, "with an exactness that is wonderful and needless. His description of the pilgrimage in the 'Trionfo' is one of the most terrible things he has written; yet it is horrible too, for he makes no sign of pity, he sees with the eyes not of a man but of a god or a devil, and is eternally scornful of poor people who were worthy of tears, who would have called forth the tears of a greater man." There are no people in D'Annunzio's novels, they are

"only real in so far as they are of little importance, in so far as he has spent but little pains on them." Here is an admirable passage from Mr. Hutton's general estimate of D'Annunzio:—

Profound, in the strict sense of the word; never, as is almost a matter of course in modern English literature, without ideas, he is at one and the same time a Mystic and a Realist. Taking the side neither of the angels nor of the devils he is even scornful of man, a passion for whom has led to some of the great indiscretions in literature. Yet as a Mystic he is never far from reality, even as in realism he is almost always a poet, consumed it would seem even when in the close embrace of the actual world, with a lust for the beauty of mere words, desiring almost before anything beside the emotion of their flight, and sweep and glory and terror. And in the quest for this beauty he has searched all lands and ransacked the fields of Cadmus and the burial-places of the Atridae. Nor is he without the moods and the grave serious accents of the sensualist, pursued by the hallucination of desire, in which madness he, like all in the grip of that demon, is minute, dreary, infinitely infinitesimal.

As to D'Annunzio's future Mr. Hutton is in doubt; he thinks his true inspiration lies in the living world. Only there we hardly agree with Mr. Hutton. It would be almost a miracle for D'Annunzio to deal truly with real things.

THE dedication to Earl Russell's "Lay Sermons" reads thus: "To my Wife, whose courage and devotion have been my chief solace in Prison." Earl Russell proclaims himself an agnostic, which does not mean very much, and he writes fluently of many matters, including such subjects as "Vengeance" and "Holiness in Seclusion." "The main lines of thought," he says, "have long been present to me, and an enforced seclusion has given me an opportunity of developing them, of which I have been glad to take advantage."

WE opened the "Daily Telegraph" the other day to discover what looked like a new and totally unexpected departure in the conduct of that journal; but it turned out to be only a new departure in advertising. "Answers," it appeared, was just starting a new serial, and it took a whole page in the "Daily Telegraph" to announce the fact. There was the title of the story, an illustration which the placards have recently made familiar, and the first four chapters. Only at the bottom of the last column did we find the truth. Such an advertisement as this at any rate indicates the popularity of a certain kind of fiction. How is such fiction written? Sometimes, we know, the following method is pursued. An artist on the staff of the paper makes four striking drawings. After these drawings have been reproduced the prospective author is sent for, and he is told that there he has his four principal dramatic situations. From those four drawings springs a story running to one hundred thousand words. We know one writer whose inspiration is so easily fired that after taking his cue from the drawings he goes home and dictates into a phonograph at the rate of several thousand words a day. Then a typist comes in and does the rest. The method has obvious advantages, and literature is not concerned at all.

THE illustrated author article goes merrily on. The New York "Bookman" for this month shows us Mr. Booth Tarkington very nicely dressed, with a curl on his forehead, and Mr. Booth Tarkington in flannels without the curl. Our own "Sketch" has an illustrated interview with M. de Blowitz. Under one of the photographs we read: "My dear wife's toilet-table has remained untouched since her death," and under another, "And I read a good deal in my victoria." Nothing remains to be said of this kind of thing, except that it is quite harmless and sometimes amusing. Only a strike of authors could put an end to it, and authors, we fear, never strike.

WE notice that in the list of the best selling books given in the New York "Bookman," not a single English author is represented. We referred not long ago to the decline of the popularity of English authors in America, and though it is of course by no means to be inferred that the decline is yet numerically serious, the plain fact remains that America is now on the way to supplying her own needs in the way of literature. Here is the "Bookman's" list, printed in order of popularity:—

"The Virginian." Wister.
 "Oliver Horn." Smith.
 "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch." Hegan.
 "The Mississippi Bubble." Hough.
 "Castle Craneycrow."
 "Hearts Courageous." Rives.

Of the first of these, "The Virginian," Mr. Julian Hawthorne says, in the "Saturday Review" of the "New York American": "After a careful study of it, I can see nothing more in it than a long drawn-out attempt to introduce the dime novel into literature." After a criticism which endeavours to prove that Mr. Wister's novel is no novel at all, Mr. Hawthorne concludes:—

In spite of all this, and more of the same sort which I have not the heart to recite, Mr. Wister's book is one of the great successes of the year. The Macmillans publish it, but cannot turn out copies fast enough. I rejoice for their sake and for Mr. Wister's, but when I remember common sense and literature I am less content. Was Mr. Wister trying to see how much baby stuff the public would stand? Well, he has had his fun, but there is nothing to show that he, or some one else, may not safely go further yet, if there be any further.

With this we do not entirely agree. We reviewed Mr. Wister's book and said what we thought about it, and we were much kinder to Mr. Wister than this destructive countryman of his.

A CORRESPONDENT wishes to know whether we can give him any information concerning "The International New Books Society." We can only tell him that we have recently received a communication informing us that the society is in process of formation. As to the subscription the communication referred to says: "Assuming the average subscription for town members now joining a London Club to be ten guineas, may not the same amount be accepted as the maximum average subscription that should suffice to make the proposed society workable? Concessions are usually made and justly, whenever possible, to those joining anything new at the very beginning. However, a settlement of this matter cannot be made until the total number of those interested in the proposal becomes known." The society, it appears, is ambitious to have a club building in which all new books of importance may be housed, and when foreign works are under discussion it is anxious to secure the attendance of members of the various embassies. We await developments.

MR. BRIMLEY JOHNSON has certainly achieved originality of format in the booklet just issued by him under the title of "Latter Day Parables." "Booklet" is the nearest word we can arrive at; as a matter of fact the publication consists of six "parables" by various authors, each printed separately, and the whole set enclosed in a tie-up decorated wrapper. Their escape from the wrapper seems pretty certain; perhaps, save from the bookseller's point of view, that does not matter much. As for the "parables" themselves they are neat and graceful enough, though hardly worthy of this unusual form of presentation. They suffer from the usual limitations of the modern parable; two of them conclude "I awoke."

WE have already said what we think of "The Confessions of a Wife," but we are ready to admit that there may be other points of view. One such is expressed in "The Bookman" in "An Open Letter to Marna Trent, 'Wife.'" The writer says:—

Many men will laugh at you, some will sneer at you, most will misunderstand you. Many women will call you morbid, neurotic, silly, romantic; but no matter what names they call you, they will understand you. They will join in their husband's ridicule of your anatomy of misery, they will revile you and your dog and your baby, and your strong, stern, saintly doctor. But they will do it in self-defence. For, the truth is, Marna, you have let out too much.

The writer goes on to tell Marna that she has broken the oath of secrecy which is "administered by the eternal mystery of motherhood." So far we have no quarrel with the writer; but when she says, "You are not an artist, Marna. You are only a woman," we find ourselves in opposition. If Marna had been only a woman we should have had no "Confessions of a Wife"; the author's art is manifest; it is, in a way, the art of the book which makes it repellent; its agonies are decorated. Marna's critic concludes: "If every woman writes her anguish out, the world will become a nightmare." . . . Many modern women writers appear to think that women have the monopoly of the world's anguish.

Bibliographical.

MR. A. H. BULLEN'S announcements for the season have much interest for the bibliographer. In the case of his edition of Thomas Campion's "Poems," and of Hickes's translation of Lucian's "Vera Historia" (illustrated by W. Strang, J. B. Clark, and Aubrey Beardsley), he is putting within reach of the public two books which have already been privately printed—the one in 1889, the other in 1894. The former is, I suppose, admittedly the edition of Campion, who, however, is not entirely unknown to the average reader—Mr. Arber having printed some of his pieces in "An English Garner" (1877), Mr. Rhys having collected his "Lyrical Poems" in 1895, and "Fifty Songs" of his having been published in 1896 with illustrations by Mr. Ricketts. The "Vera Historia," too, has had some attention given to it of late years. Putting aside the "crib" published by Kelly in 1848, we have had Mr. A. J. Church's "A Traveller's True Tale, after the Greek" (1880), and Mr. St. J. B. W. Willson's "Lucian's Wonderland," which, illustrated by A. P. Garnett, came out so recently as 1899.

Then, Mr. Bullen is going to give us new editions of "The Poetry of George Wither" and of Count Anthony Hamilton's "Memoirs of Count Grammont." Of these, the former will come the more freshly. Wither has not been cultivated by the editors of our time. I remember no recent reprint of any of his work except that of the pieces reproduced by Henry Morley, ten years ago, in his little series of "Companion Poets." This, perhaps, may have done something towards popularizing Wither, who, of course, has his due place in the anthologies. His miscellaneous works were printed by the Spenser Society in 1872. Sir S. E. Bridges published Wither's "Select Lyrical Poems" in 1815, and some "Select Poems," with a Life, were included in 1819 in Stanford's "Works of the British Poets." Of Grammont's "Memoirs" the English translations have been numerous. Confining ourselves within the limits of the past hundred years, one may note the illustrated edition in two volumes of 1818, that by Bohn (also illustrated) which came out in 1846 and was reproduced in 1891, and the illustrated editions sent out in 1889 by Vizetelly and by Nimmo and in 1890 by Messrs. Sonnenschein.

Mr. Austin Dobson's monograph on Samuel Richardson, which was promised for the present week, but which I have not yet seen, will probably—almost certainly—prove to be the most substantial of the biographies of Richardson; more substantial even than that by Mrs. C. L. Thomson which appeared two years ago. Up to that date, Richardson's life had been dealt with almost solely by way of introduction to editions of his works and correspondence. Thus, there were Mrs. Barbauld's biographical preface to the Letters (1804), the Rev. E. Mangin's to the Works (1811), and Sir Walter Scott's (1824). To the Works as published in 1883 was prefixed (with additions) the essay by Sir Leslie Stephen included in his "Hours in a Library." Professor Saintsbury, again, contributed in 1895 a biographical introduction to his selections from "Sir Charles Grandison." To the present year belongs an introduction to the Works, written by Ethel McKenna.

One of the features of the Rev. Compton Reade's book on "The Smith Family" is a series of short biographical notes on "celebrities of the name." Among these celebrities is Alexander Smith, author of "A Life Drama" and so forth. Of him Mr. Reade says: "He collaborated with Sydney Dobell in a series of sonnets on the Crimean War. . . . Prof. Aytoun published a parody of these sonnets in May 1854, entitled 'Firmilian.'" It is quite true that "Firmilian" was published in 1854, but it could not very well be a parody of the sonnets, because they were not published till 1855. Mr. Reade trusts that his little memoirs "may prove helpful by way of reference," but they can hardly do that if the statement about "Firmilian" is a specimen of their accuracy.

It appears that Messrs. Routledge are going to reproduce, in a library edition, not *all* the stories written by G. P. R. James, but only a certain number of his historical novels. I miss from the list the names of "Agnes Sorel," "Bertrand de la Croix," "Castelnau, or The Ancien Régime," "Henry Smeaton," "The Jacquerie," "Lord Montagu's Page," and "Russell." Of these, "Agnes Sorel," "Castelnau," and "The Jacquerie" ought surely to have been included. It may be noted that James's "Works, revised by the Author," were brought together in twenty-one volumes in 1844-49.

Mr. Frowde advertises his reprint of "Manchester al Mondo" as being "from the third edition, 1638." But the third edition appeared in 1635; it was the fourth that came out in 1638. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth appeared in 1642, 1655, 1658, and 1661 respectively. In the fifteenth (1682) we find this "Contemplatio Mortis et Immortalitatis" recommended, on the title-page, as "very proper to be given at funerals." I submit the suggestion to modern buyers. The "Contemplatio," by the way, was reprinted so recently as 1880 with an introduction by J. E. Bailey.

The title of Mr. A. E. W. Mason's new story, "The Four Feathers," reminds one that William Black published, over a quarter of a century ago, a novel called "Three Feathers." Alas, that is all that I remember of Black's book—its name. I see, too, that Mr. Stanley Weyman's forthcoming story is at present named "The Long Night." "Through the Long Night," it will be recollected, is the title of one of Mrs. Lynn Linton's novels.

By way of preparation for Mr. Warwick Bond's new edition of the Works of John Lyly, the student might do worse than turn to the edition of the Dramatic Works published by F. W. Fairholt, with notes and a memoir, in 1858; to G. P. Baker's biographical introduction to Lyly's "Endymion" (1894); and to the essay on Lyly in a recent number of the "Quarterly Review."

THE BOOKWORM.

Reviews.

A Religion in the Making?

MODERN SPIRITUALISM: A History and a Criticism. By Frank Podmore. 2 Vols. (Methuen. 21s. net.)

THIS is a much needed book. Although we may reject, with Mr. Podmore, the partisan estimates which would place the number of professed Spiritualists in the world at ten, fifteen, or even twenty millions, there can be no doubt that the sudden growth of Spiritualism is one of the most startling facts in the modern history of religion. Starting, as it apparently did, from the tricks of a few mischievous girls, and having no firmer basis than a series of utterly trivial "phenomena" which its staunchest adherents now admit to be tainted with fraud, it has spread until it seems to satisfy the religious needs of, at any rate, a large proportion of the Anglo-Saxon race. As it has done this, moreover, without producing a single leader of marked personality, and in the teeth of repeated exposures, it is evident that its roots must lie hid in some peculiarities of human nature which have not yet received full investigation, and a rational, well-documented, and, so far as may be, impartial study of its rise and progress was much to be desired. It seems likely that the book of Mr. Podmore, who will be remembered as having been engaged with the late Frederic Myers in earlier investigations of the subject, has come just in the nick of time to gratify this desire.

In the first place, the soil out of which sprang this rank weed or flourishing plant must be carefully examined. Mr. Podmore is of opinion—and we are bound to say that we think he has proved his case—that the origin of the whole movement is to be looked for in the intellectual and spiritual condition of the United States when the Rochester knockings first gained notoriety in 1848. Fresh from the independence confirmed to them by the war of 1812, and before the War of Secession had come to weld them into a nation, our cousins beyond the seas had long before carried with them into their new home the deep-seated religious enthusiasm of the English middle classes, without the checks that our own institutions then imposed upon its extravagance. Hence the United States were in the middle of last century seething with a mass of religious sects quite as numerous and nearly as strange as those which sprang up in England during the Reign of the Saints. The socialist ideas, too, which heralded the great uprisings of the wage-workers throughout Europe had taken firm root in a country where, as Mr. Podmore reminds us, there were as yet no settled standards of life and conduct; and communities having for their object the freedom of man, on millennial principles, from the curse of labour, the institution of marriage, and other supposed checks upon his intellectual development were springing up like mushrooms in many of the States of the Union. But in addition to all these predispositions to receive the new gospel with fervour, there was a subtler and deeper cause which Mr. Podmore shows us, we think, for the first time. The phenomena which Mesmer made famous, had in England been lost sight of during the struggle with Napoleon, or were at the most remembered as something not remotely connected with the "Jacobinism" that was then looked upon as the fiercest enemy of Church and State. But on the Continent, the opposite was the case. Although Mesmer had himself asserted the material origin of the trance state, and the experience of all his immediate successors from de Puységur down to Cahagnet had gone to confirm this, yet the German mystics had followed Swedenborg in asserting that the vagaries of the entranced were due to their communication with the spirit world. This theory, connected, as it always has been in history, with Apocalyptic dreams of a catastrophe which

should clear the way for a regeneration of the human race, had been imported into America with the socialist ideas of Fourier and others, and had done much to supply the wilder sects there dominant with the impetus which Catholicism derives from its constantly recurring miracles. Hence America, stirred up further, as we may suppose, by the news of the political events occurring in Europe, was on every side in a condition to receive a new revelation.

Into this already troubled world, the news of the mysterious knockings and rappings in the undistinguished domicile of the Fox family fell like a shell. These did not, as Mr. Podmore shows us with much skill, differ in any material respect from the happenings which had in the preceding centuries always centred round the tales of witchcraft, and we are luckily saved from any lengthened discussion of their genuineness by the confession of the Fox girls that they originated in imposture. But in an uncritical community with a full share of the "wonder-greed" natural to members of the Teutonic race, their fame spread like wild-fire, and the Foxes and their imitators were soon giving public exhibitions of their wonderful powers in every large town in America. The Swedenborgians, who seem to have been then a more considerable body in the States than they have ever been here, supplied an already organised religion in which these supposed marvels had a recognised place, and there was soon a large number of otherwise rational persons who believed, in some flocculent and not very clearly defined way, that by means of the mysterious thumps and raps going on around them they were in effect communicating with the spirits of the dead. Returning, as such ideas do, to Europe, the theory had a mixed reception corresponding, it may be, to the varying peculiarities of the nations among which it now found itself. Among the Latin races it had to face the hostility of the Catholic Church and the indifference of a laity already satiated with marvels of a different kind; and, in consequence, was met then and since with attempts to force it within the range of natural law. In Germany it was, of course, eagerly accepted by the mystics, but, with that odd fear of a clear-cut conclusion that seems instinctive in modern German thought, they have always preferred the German Spiritualists to dwell upon the non-rational side of the matter, and there has been no country where the facts of the case have been more effectually obscured within the folds of a cloudy metaphysic. In England the resistance to change offered by a large and cultured class gifted with leisure and addicted, it may be, to material amusements rather than to intellectual speculation, formed a more powerful obstacle, and it required repeated importations of American mediums before the learned world could be got even to investigate its claims to attention. Even now, perhaps—as Sir Walter Besant was quick to point out in his "Dr. Paulus"—the atmosphere of England is more unfavourable to spiritualistic pretensions than that of any country in the world.

The phenomena of Spiritualism need not occupy us long; for Mr. Podmore, after a prolonged study of the evidence collected by the Society of Psychical Research and by himself, comes to the conclusion that they are mainly to be attributed to fraud either consciously or unconsciously practised. "The strongest evidence yet considered for the genuineness of any of these manifestations falls far short of the standard of proof which is required before any such claim [sc. as the intervention of spirits] can be admitted," are the terms in which he dismisses the earlier phenomena, and he tells us later "That however various the conditions, and however diverse the manifestations of the alleged new force, the evidence in all cases alike falls short in the one particular which alone would make it conclusive, furnishes a presumption against the genuineness of the phenomena which has in the course of two generations accumulated sufficient

strength to be almost irresistible." While he speaks unhesitatingly—as do most Spiritualists for that matter—of the "deliberate fraud of the professional medium," he is more willing to allow a large measure of good faith to those seers who do not derive any pecuniary benefit from the exhibition of their supposed gifts. But he points out that "the medium is always a person of unstable nervous equilibrium, in whom the control normally exercised by the higher brain-centres is liable, on slight provocation, to be abrogated, leaving the organism, as in dream or somnambulism, to the guidance of impulses which in a state of unimpaired consciousness would have been suppressed before they could have resulted in action." In other words, he is not thoroughly responsible for his actions, and the imposture which he thereby abets may not imply any ethical guilt on his part. He also reminds us that all the conditions of the modern séance are admirably suited to the production of "sensory hallucinations" on the part of the assistants. How far these apologies are dictated by respect for those learned men—such as Sir William Crookes and Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, for example—who still think that some of the spiritualistic phenomena may have a genuine basis, and that there is therefore some case to answer, we will not stop to inquire.

But Spiritualism is in itself a more wonderful phenomena than any of the marvels which surrounded its infancy, and we cannot help comparing it—we trust without irreverence or profanity—with the way in which Christianity must have appeared to many of the serious and tolerant thinkers of the Roman world. Then, as we do now, they must have seen a religion, misty and undefined in its doctrines, yet holding before its votaries the dream of a new heaven and a new earth, pressing upwards from the lower to the upper classes of the people, with its reality attested by miracles which never seem to have been considered convincing arguments by its earliest adherents, and which were supplemented by others that thinking men in later times have united in condemning as fraudulent. It is true that the new religion lacks the central figure of the Founder which has done so much for the old, and it is odd that, as we said in the beginning, it has produced as yet neither prophet nor priest of distinguished personality. Yet we must remember that to a Roman of the time of Marcus Aurelius, the Sacred Head must have appeared without the veil of mystery and reverence which the piety of succeeding ages has woven round it, and if Spiritualism should in the future choose to exalt the dim memory of some of its earlier teachers into a parody of the Divine Figure, the parallel would be complete. In such an event, we should have assisted at the birth pangs of a religion which might go far. But in any case, Mr. Podmore's very interesting book will always form a complete guide to a very complex subject.

John the Devious.

JOHN LACKLAND. By Kate Norgate. (Macmillan. 8s. 6d. net.)

IN this excellent monograph on the worst of English kings, Miss Norgate follows Green's defence of John's ability. It is not a whitewashing; but it refutes the common notion of his incapacity, sloth, and cowardice. Done with admirable clearness, fairness, and thoroughness, it deserves to be reckoned with by all serious students. Though she has mastered her period, it is not a history of that period, but the study of a man.

We do not believe John "the ablest"—as Mr. Green called him—of the Angevins, though we potently believe him the "most ruthless." The Angevins were too able a lot for such superlative. An able man he was, none the less, and a strong man, and a fearless. It needed not

Mr. Green, nor Miss Norgate, to convince us that the traditional view of his character was mistaken. The broad facts of his story were enough, set forth (for example) by a writer so early as Lingard—the unregarded father of Freeman, Gardiner, and all them that have the passionless modern passion for impartiality and original documents. This man a cowardly, cringing, brainless weakling, bold only where he was unopposed? This man, who after Runnymede took his measures in resolute silence, then swept England like a roused lion with a sudden army, and penned the barons, like scared huntsmen, quaking and impotent behind the walls of London? Roger Bigod, who bearded the great first Edward to his face, Longsword Salisbury, and the rest of that turbulent baronage,—were these wolves like to be so cowed by a jackal? A strong and terrible king it must have been to face such men down. Only despair of themselves could reduce them to call in France. When Edward II. faced the barons, they tore him to pieces. Henry III., Richard II., both tried it and both failed. It took a French invasion to keep John from succeeding; and even so, he fought an equal war with France and barons together. Was this weakling's work?

None the less, we do not think the traditional and contemporary view altogether groundless—traditional views seldom are, however mistaken. One should beware of mere reaction, mere pivoting round to the opposite pole. We cannot quite take Miss Norgate's estimate—that John was a strong and able king, who fell through no weakness of nature or errors in conduct, political or military, but through "the almost superhuman wickedness" of his life. John is one of those subtle characters, in weighing which one must distinguish and divide; for plain "yea" or "nay" will equally lead us into blunder. Nor are we clear that mere wickedness is enough for political ruin. It is a nice, comfortable belief, but—"Tis a mad world, my masters!" John had not unity and tenacity of purpose: there, we think, lay his unsound spot. Perfidious subtlety, backed by masterful selfishness like John's, though it be conjoined with cruelty and tyrannical licence, is an excellent weapon of political success. But it must be swayed with patient and far-reaching purpose, or its cuts the user. John had neither consistent purpose nor patience. He followed after the object of the moment, and with all the heady temper of his Angevin race. The devil's ways without the devil's pertinacity and the devil's long head make a sorry mangle, even in this world.

John's temper, his pleasure, or that quality which the graceful Greek called *hybris* and the heavy-thudding Saxon calls "swelled head," could always draw a red-herring across his path. He would wreck a policy to wreak a revenge. Persuasive and smooth-tongued, he loved the crooked ways of diplomacy; while his energies were sudden and spasmodic. He tore a girl-bride from the powerful Lusignans, his Continental vassals, divorcing his wife to marry her. It was Philip's suggestion, yet he was foolish enough to take it. When even that failed to rouse the Lusignans, in very wantonness of arrogance he proceeded to aggression on their lands. They turned at last, and the war began again with the Lusignans by Philip's side. With the same reckless tyranny he had spread disaffection even through his own Normandy, and treachery crippled him on every hand. His English barons would not aid him this time, without redress of grievances. He refused to promise it, took their money, and left them behind. If he had one policy, it was the keeping of his Angevin domains: but to the pride and caprice of the moment he had sacrificed even that. He lost them, every shred; and without one straight battle for it.

His character showed in war as in peace. When he could not diplomatize crookedly, he fought crookedly, without steady plan. He loved surprises, rushes on an unexpected enemy, night attacks, sudden raids and dashes where he could come off safely from a weak foe. On a

strong foe he hovered, hither and thither, seeing towns and castles snapped before his eyes. Join battle he would not, save (like Red Comyn's slayers) he could "mak siccer,"—no coward, but to his over-cunning it seemed such fool's risk. It was strange wars between him and Philip Augustus, who loved fair fight no better. But Philip had set purpose. He nibbled at territory till he ate it away, drawing back when the cat came; an over-match for desultory John. John waged five wars, and never fought a pitched battle. The single time he offered it, he had assurance from his scouts that he was in overwhelming numbers.

To regain his lost lands he wanted allies, mercenaries, and money. He built up alliances; the money he wrung from the Church, the Jews, and every device on his barons' estates. Again he let passion wreck his plans. Barons and Churchmen had prevented the levies he would have led into France; they should find him King in England. So he ground them under his heel. Thus he may have reasoned; in any case he began a reign of unprecedented terror, which led him to Runnymede. The triumphant barons treated him as a fallen King; he brought in a foreign host and filled the land with the smoke of their ruin. They whistled over the French, and he died biting savagely at his hunters, but to the last refusing the hazard of a new Hastings. He was ruined, not because he was wicked, but because he was reckless. He let his passion foil his purpose. A bribe and a lie could make friends of foes; and he recked not that he made foes of friends. He trusted in the perfidy of men, till even the bad abandoned him, as he had long been abandoned by the good.

Style and the Scholar.

DEMETRIUS ON STYLE. Edited by W. Rhys Roberts, Litt.D. (Cambridge University Press. 9s. net.)

PROF. RHYNS ROBERTS is the most notable of English workers in the rather arid and rarely harvested field of Greek rhetorical theory. To his earlier editions of Longinus "On the Sublime" and the "Three Literary Letters" of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, he now adds an edition of the formal treatise on prose style by a certain Demetrius, who has often been identified with Demetrius of Phalerum, a Peripatetic writer of the second generation after Aristotle, but whom Prof. Roberts is inclined to date some four centuries later. As a bit of editing the book is admirable, in the completeness and lucidity of its scholarship; and the introductory sketch of "The Study of Prose Style among the Greeks" is a valuable supplement to Prof. Saintsbury's recent "History of Criticism" and a foretaste of the writer's own promised work on the same subject. We doubt, however, whether, to the ordinary Englishman, who is not a professional student of antiquity, Demetrius of Phalerum or of elsewhere has very much to say. His minute and often pedantic analysis of the stylistic qualities of Thucydides, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Lysias, and the rest certainly offers nothing which even approaches in critical value some of those famous passages in which Longinus lays his finger upon the "sublime" or rather the "surpassing" or "infinite" in literature, by which, indeed, he means precisely those qualities which most hopelessly elude formal analysis. The most interesting thing in Demetrius is his general differentiation, not however in its main lines originated by himself, of the broad types to which Greek prose style, and probably all prose style, attaches itself. Each of these has its virtues and its appropriate subject-matter, and with each is compared, in characteristic Aristotelian fashion, the vicious style, which proceeds from its excess or tasteless exercise. There are the simple, the elevated, the elegant and the forcible styles, and of these the

corresponding vices or dangers are aridity, frigidity, affectation and gracelessness. Prof. Roberts suggests that the four styles may be illustrated in English poetry from Wordsworth, Milton, Tennyson and Shakespeare. It would be an interesting exercise in rhetoric to consider from whom the four vices might best be illustrated. As for the rest of the treatise, with its careful tabulation of the tricks of rhythm and the figures of speech proper to each style, it must be admitted that in part it is hardly applicable beyond the limits of Greek prose itself, and in part it is so remorseless in its dissection of the elements of good writing as to be a rather dangerous instrument of intellectual training. There have of course been writers—Stevenson, as Prof. Roberts points out, was one—who have been able to "play the sedulous ape" to the classics, and ultimately to pluck the fruits of the process without running shipwreck on its risks. But this needs an exceptionally strong individuality, and for the man of ordinary talent who wishes to learn to write, we suspect that the wiser course is to trust to his ear, and to the unconscious training of his ear which a less analytic familiarity with the great masterpieces is sure to afford.

The Essay.

UNPOPULAR PAPERS. By Norman Alliston. (Allen. 3s. 6d. net.)

WE do not know why Mr. Alliston should have called his essays "unpopular," unless it be that his ears were gratified by the profusion of *p's* thus attained in the complete title. The views which he enunciates are of a respectable and mild sort which for the most part will win the approval of intellectually respectable and mild people. Had they been revolutionary, paradoxical, wayward, or ostentatiously preposterous, their chances of being read and noticed would have been increased.

We shall not disguise our opinion that the likelihood of Mr. Alliston's philosophy impressing itself upon the age is remote. He undertakes the essay—and we seem to see him setting out upon it—in a delicate and serious spirit. We seem to see him as a man who has studied the *finesse* of epithet-selection and word-arrangement; a man who is always careful to repudiate violence, exaggeration, and the mob; a man who has correct notions and knows that he has them, and is continually and acutely conscious of them; a man who is preoccupied with subtlety and nicety and justness; a man who carries *pros* in one pocket and *cons* in the other, in such quantities that his coat looks a shade clumsy. This man has thought about life and things of sorts, and has arrived at a system into which humanity has got to fit willy nilly. He has come to definite conclusions, with the unerring assurance of the judicious person. The essay form naturally appeals to such a man. It is unexceptionable, slightly superior, and not too exhausting. It needs no large creative effort, no ruinous expense of spirit. What it demands, he thinks, is meticulousness, and gentle ingenuity, a careful marshalling of "points," and restraint—especially restraint. And so he writes an essay, on the "Newspaper Age," the "Tourist," the "Public," "Force of Circumstances," or "Conversation." He writes it with skill: he spares no pain, and omits no subtlety. As he does it, it is everything that an essay ought to be, a charming greenhouse plant, a well-cut stone. But take your eyes away and look at it again with new eyes, cold unprejudiced eyes, and lo! it has mysteriously become a dandelion or a pebble by the road side. The delusion that a distinguished essay can be concocted by care and produced by calculation vanishes. Nothing but a distinguished individuality will produce a distinguished essay, which is an expression, not of views, or of fancies, or of facts, but of the general cast of a mind. Essays are

difficult to write, not merely because they deal with the general and the abstract, but also because the scope of them is so limited. One cannot combat the opinions of the ages or the prejudices of the age in an essay; one cannot erect a new philosophy: space forbids. And if one merely supports the old notions, one may be as subtle as one pleases, but one is obvious. Nothing is new; everything has been said: therein lies the curse of the essayist.

Recall the essays of the great essayists, and you do not recall opinions, but pictures of men, of individualities. Lamb, as a thinking machine, as a cultivator of views on men and affairs, was a rather ordinary person. Mr. Bernard Shaw could have doubled him up on every subject under the sun except possibly dramatic poetry. The system of thought expounded by Elia strikes no note of novelty; it is neither profound nor comprehensive. Yet there is "something" in the essays of Elia which enchains, and will enchain, the attention of the most powerful and finely organised minds. What is that "something"? Everyone feels it, but no one can express it. The man who could explain it could reason away the flower in the crannied wall. All we can say is that some people have it—an individuality, a magic, a touch—and others have it not. And to those who have it nothing else matters, neither learning nor wisdom nor correctness; this curious emotional quality suffices of itself.

As for Mr. Alliston, his individuality is not sufficiently an individuality. His mind can be postulated and its workings foreseen. When he speaks of tourists we are infallibly aware that he will say:—

Among all kinds of tourists, the rarest is one of independent poise; who does not habitually refer to what other people have said and are told to say about every sight and locality; who is not concerned with what may be thought of his excursion, but, appreciating his own faculties, consults and enjoys their findings without respect to outside confirmation or refutation. Such a one is dictator to himself. He chooses what he shall see, where and how he shall see it; and following his own canons, picks out his own congenial subjects, and passes a direct first-hand opinion. Certain tourists, for instance, require a guide to point out to them something fine or praiseworthy. From this need we see at once that what they view will be solely of assumed delight or repulsion to them, and therefore valueless. Other few discover in the most minute and ordinary things, suggestion and entertainment. These are the able travellers.

And what is wrong with that? Nothing. Had there been tourists a century ago, Lamb might well have said just the same. But his saying of it would have been a manifestation of his existence as Lamb. There would have been a flavour, an odour, a tinge. . . . And in that flavour, odour, tinge would lie the dear romance of what it was to be Lamb.

Mr. Alliston's work is praiseworthy, or rather it is not blameworthy. And when we remark that it does not justify its existence we would like not to be thought cutting.

Travel.

BRITISH NIGERIA. By Lieut.-Colonel A. F. Mockler-Feryman. (Cassell. 12s. 6d. net.)

THE GREAT MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS OF SOUTH AMERICA. By Paul Fountain. (Longmans.)

TWO ON THEIR TRAVELS. By Ethel Colquhoun. (Heinemann. 10s. 6d. net.)

THE author of "British West Africa" has followed up that work with a volume entitled "British Nigeria." The Introduction gives us a general sketch of Nigeria, the southern part of which "has been in continuous intercourse with Europe for several centuries." The

expedition of Mungo Park is well described, and with its failure closed "the first act in the great drama of the discovery of the Niger." Other expeditions followed, all the outcome of the belief that the Niger was an affluent of the Congo. Numbers of people had sought the true outlet of the Niger, but according to this author one man alone had guessed it, while one other "had been very near the mark": they were James McQueen and Hert Reichard. Following the history of the explorations comes the story of the slow and difficult opening up of Nigeria and the attempts at establishing friendly relations with the people. Space will not permit our tracing even the faintest outline of this interesting book, but it would be well to notice particularly the chapter on "International complications." The chapters devoted to the sociology of the people, dealing as they do with Paganism, slavery, and folklore, will be found no mere repetitions of travellers' tales, but rather an integral portion of a carefully written book from the pen of one who knows British Nigeria.

From West Africa to South America is a far cry, but Mr. Paul Fountain is an imperturbable guide through "The Great Mountains and Forests of South America." His style is at once so artless and so vivid, he is so obviously not writing for applause that one could quote passage after passage of this book which might have come from the pen of some unsophisticated pupil of Herodotus. The first four chapters deal mainly with his trip up the Purus and his notes on animals, particularly on jaguars, pumas, spider monkeys, and anacondas have all the freshness of first hand investigation. Mr. Fountain is never tedious and has the quite unconscious gift of being able to place himself in true perspective, not as man lord of the universe, but as one lonely figure holding his right to live against all sorts of other animals bent on precisely the same object. "Small deer came at night in great numbers to drink at the lake where the jaguars lay in wait for them, as also did we," he writes without comment upon the similarity of motive. His description of Indians feasting upon the anaconda and the subsequent tornado is most realistic. But what gives the essence of the individuality revealed in this book is the following passage. After describing walks through virgin forest at the rate of two miles a day of fourteen hours he continues placidly:—

The life does not suit many men, and I have known some to break down under the strain and lose their reason. Such men's insanity generally takes a dangerous form, and they almost always give the first warning of their terrible malady by committing some dreadful outrage on their fellow-travellers. I myself delight in this solitary life.

And, apart altogether from the value of his notes on natural history, just because he has the real spirit of the wanderer, without any particular effort he manages to communicate this "delight" to his readers.

"Two on their Travels," by Ethel Colquhoun, takes us out of the wilderness into the region of inconsequent globe-trotting. Usually books of this sort fall into two distinct classes. The first carries the prattle of the English nursery into eastern palaces, the second apes the tedious accuracy of the guide-book. This volume, however, belongs to neither class. The author conducts us from Singapore to Java, from Java to Borneo, through "a roundabout way to Manila," and thence to Japan and Korea, on the Amur, through Siberia back to London without boring us on a single page. On the contrary, the volume contains many charming sketches, at once acute and adroit, and never commits the folly of taking itself or the world too seriously.

